STATE AID FOR ROADS

PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT FOR IMPROVED HIGHWAYS.

What New Jersey Has Accomplished—How the Expense Is Divided. Massachusetts' Good Work—Advance In Connecticut.

More than half the states have passed new and progressive road laws, and many hundreds of miles of good roads have already been built under the influence of the new conditions of administration, finance and construction. The general trend of legislation enacted in these states is as follows: More rigid provisions for carrying out the old systems without radical change in the systems themselves, more liberal tax levies, substitution of money tax instead of labor, local assessment, according to benefits, for the construction of new roads; construction by townships, counties and districts, with power to issue bonds; state highway commissions, provisions for working convicts, regulations compelling and encouraging the use of wide tires, state aid to road building and construction of state roads.

New Jersey was the first state to take any radical step toward the improvement of her public highways. Her state aid law was passed in 1891. It provides that on petition of the owners of two-thirds of the lands bordering any public road not less than a mile in length asking that the road be improved and agreeing to pay 10 per cent of the cost the county officials shall improve the road, one-third of the expenses to be borne by the state if the road is brought to the standard fixed by the state commissioner of public roads and the balance (66 2-3 per cent) by the county. The state's expenditures for such improvements in any one year are limited to $150,000, while the county is limited to one-fourth of 1 per cent of its assessed valuation. At this rate the law makes possible the expenditure of $450,000 a year, and at $3,000 per mile this builds 150 miles of road. Ten miles of road were built in 1892, 25 miles in 1893, 69 miles in 1894, and since 1895 the applications for new roads have been far in excess of the limit prescribed by law.

Under this law about 450 miles of improved road have already been built in New Jersey, the state's portion of the expense being about $715,800. The counties and towns have built out of their own treasuries 450 more miles, which brings the total mileage of improved roads for the state up to 900. These roads cost at first about $6,000 per mile, but on account of the reduction in the price of materials and the increase of labor saving machinery the cost has been reduced to about half this amount. The farmers, who at first strongly opposed the law, are now equally enthusiastic for it, and more roads are being petitioned for than can possibly be built in many years out of the limited state appropriation. The system seems to be popular with all classes, and it is being carefully considered by the legislatures of other states. Its principles have been adopted by Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and California. These laws of which state aid is the principal feature are regarded by the active advocates of road reform as affording a satisfactory solution of the problem.

Massachusetts, like New Jersey, also has adopted a system of road improvement which it is believed will result in a few years in securing to that state highways that will be second in excellence to none in the United States and equal to some of the best in the old world. The state has a permanent highway commission consisting of three persons. Each year this commission is allowed to spend $600,000 for building and maintaining roads, which are called state roads. The law provides that not more than ten miles of road can be built in any one county in a year and that within six years after the construction of any state road the county in which the road is situated must pay to the state one-fourth of the money expended. Nearly 300 miles of excellent roads have been built in Massachusetts under this new system, the average cost per mile of which was about $9,000.

Connecticut has made rapid progress in building highways during the last five years. It now has a highway commission, which was provided in 1895-6 with $450,000 and in 1897-8 with $400,000 for road improvement. In 1895-6 the state paid one-third the expense of constructing the roads, the town one-third and the county the remainder, but in 1897-8 the state increased its part of the expense to one half, the other half being borne by the towns.

Although the Rhode Island commissioner of highways does not favor state aid as adopted in the adjacent states, the legislature has at his suggestion passed a law which enables him to build a half mile sample of good macadamized highway in each town. These permanent object lessons are of great benefit to the towns where good highways have not been built and are conducive to more liberal appropriations for new roads as well as more thorough construction when the local authorities choose to carry the work forward.

The legislature of New York passed a bill last year which provides that the state's share in the improvement of highways shall be 50 per cent of the cost, the county's share 35 per cent and the town's share the remainder. The boards of supervisors are given the right to decide what roads, if any, are to be improved, thus making the matter of road improvement entirely optional. No new offices were created, the state engineer being placed in charge of all road work. The law seems to give satisfaction. Several miles of new roads have been built, and work is still in progress under its provisions.

A Jockey's Sensation When Riding.

"If you ride with your head down—that is to say, bent slightly, so that the wind does not beat right on to your face—you can breathe easily, but if you hold your mouth wide open and let the air beat right in your face then you will have great difficulty in breathing, and if the race is a long one you will become exhausted by the end of the ride." So said a well known jockey when questioned on the subject of what his sensations were when riding in a race.

"A mile race on a good horse is run in about 1 minute and 40 seconds. A mile in 1 minute and 40 seconds is at the rate of 36 miles an hour, so, you see, a race horse travels at train speed.

"If you want to know how it feels to go through the air at race horse speed, just hang your head out of a railway carriage window, turning your face toward the way the train is traveling. At the same time imagine that you are sitting in a saddle and have to hold on to your horse and guide him on to victory if possible, keeping him from being run down or interfered with.

"It is no easy task to ride a horse in a race. The jockey must have all his wits about him. He does not have much time to think how he feels. When riding in a neck and neck race down the home stretch. I forget everything except that I must strain every nerve to pass the other horses. No thought is then given to the plaudits from the grand stand."

The Gentle Reader.

What has become of the gentle reader? asks Samuel M. Crothers in The Atlantic. One does not like to think that he has passed away with the stage coach and the weekly news letter and that henceforth we are to be confronted only with the stony glare of the intelligent reading public. Once upon a time—that is to say, a generation or two ago—he was very highly esteemed. To him books were dedicated with long rambling prefaces and with episodes which were their own excuse for being. In the very middle of the story the writer would stop with a word of apology or explanation addressed to the gentle reader or at the very least with a nod or a wink no matter if the fate of the hero lie in suspense or the plot be inextricably involved.

"Hang the plot!" says the author. "I must have a chat with the gentle reader and find out what he thinks about it."

And so confidences were interchanged, and there was gossip about the universe and suggestions in regard to the queerness of human nature until at last the author would jump up with: "Enough of this, gentle reader; perhaps it's time to go back to the story."

Miss Kingsley and the Gorillas.

On the Gabun river Miss Mary Kingsley's guide one day called to her to creep quietly through the bushes and then she saw a family of five gorillas—an old male, three females and a young one. The guide sneezed which alarmed the gorillas, and they fled with a bark and a howl, the old male swinging from bough to bough like an acrobat on a trapeze.

On another day Miss Kingsley and her two guides came suddenly upon a solitary male gorilla, who, as usual, had appropriated a forest glade as a park for his private enjoyment. Furious at the intrusion, the brute, instead of fleeing, came shambling toward them, growling fiercely. "Shoot him," whispered Miss Kingsley. "I dare not," said the guide, "until he comes quite close. I have only one gun. The other is out of order. If I miss, he will kill us."

The gorilla came nearer. Rearing himself on his hind legs he beat his breast and roared, just as Du Chaillu described long ago. Then, running forward, he stopped and roared again and again ran forward until quite close. Then the guide fired and the gorilla dropped dead.—Chambers' Journal.

How to Make Cheese Soup.

Cheese soup is an agreeable change where soup is a daily affair. Put a quart of milk on to boil with a blade of mace, a carrot and an onion. Rub two tablespoonfuls of butter and two tablespoonfuls of flour together, strain the milk, add the butter and flour, and stir until thick. Add three large tablespoonfuls of grated cheese, take from the fire, add the beaten yolks of two eggs, with salt and cayenne to taste. Serve at once with grated parmesan cheese.

How to Avoid Pimples.

Keeping the body scrupulously clean is one of the best remedies in the world for such complexion disorders as pimples and blackheads. The glands of the face being the most sensitive of any in the body, the poisonous matter collects there. If the pores of the body are free and in a healthful state they will throw off the worthless secretions, and it is not likely to gather on the face and neck. While the complexion brush will cleanse the pores of the face—when it is used with pure castile soap and plenty of warm water every night—yet the good work will progress at double the pace if the body is gone over quickly every day with a firm bristled flesh brush. With soap and water and good rough towels that catch hold well any woman is possessed of superb beauty making accessories. They are of far more importance than the lotions and the cream, although these, where assisted by health and cleanliness and a nutritious diet, will do their share of the work conscientiously and with credit.

How to Curry Tomatoes.

Cut tomatoes in slices, bake them, grate an apple and chop an onion fine, and fry these in butter till quite tender; add a heaping dessertspoonful of curry powder, four tablespoonfuls of gravy or rich soup stock; simmer all together for a few minutes. Add the tomatoes and a teaspoonful of milk, a little lemon juice and a little chutney.

FRUIT AND FLOWERS

THE PEACH CROP.

How It Is Graded and Packed by a Successful Michigan Grower.

A wagon filled with the round peck picking baskets, each basket full of peaches just as they came from the tree, drove up to the barn door. The pickers use a strap that hooks on to the baskets and then goes over the shoulders, leaving both hands free to work with. When a basket is filled it is taken to the wagon and exchanged for an empty one, unhooking and rehooking being an easy matter. Thus

GRADING PEACHES BY MACHINERY.

the fruit reaches the barn without being rehandled. When the wagon reached the barn one man lifted the baskets from it and carefully poured the fruit, as desired, into the hopper or upper end of the grader.

Another man sat on a stool and worked the foot treadles which keep the screw feeders in motion. There are two of these revolving feeder rods, one on each side, and their mission is to keep the peaches moving steadily along down the incline. As the fruit passed before the treadle man he guided it with his hands to prevent jamming or crowding, at the same time throwing out (into the small basket at the top) all overripe or imperfect peaches.

Passing downward, the smallest fruit drops through an opening and rolls out of the first (or upper) canvas spout, into a bushel basket beneath; the next largest falls into the next basket, and so on down to the end—the largest specimens making the entire journey and then rolling into a fifth basket (not shown in picture), placed at the lowest end of the machine. Now, counting backward (or up hill), we have, first, "selects," then No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and culls. In packing, each is, of course, packed separately, and the various numbers are designated by crosses: One cross for No. 3, two crosses for No. 2 and three for No. 1. The big peaches are marked "selects" or "fancy;" the culls are largely fed to pigs and the soft fruit is sold locally. It took only ten minutes to run the entire wagon load of peaches (eight bushels) through the machine. Still more surprising, the graded fruit did not appear bruised in the least by the operation.

"It's all owing to how you pick them," explained the grower. "To grade or ship decently, peaches must be taken from the trees while still hard—that is, when they have fully matured, but have not yet started to soften."

Rural New Yorker, giving an illustrated account of a paying Michigan orchard, in which occurs the foregoing, further says that for shipment the regular fifth bushel basket, with slat cover and red tarlatan beneath, is used. Dealers seem to prefer the tarlatan covering; they object if it is not used. Putting on the tarlatan and covers is done at a separate table fitted with several revolving trays, the latter being something of a novel idea. When the workman takes up a filled basket, he sets it down on one of these trays, puts on the tarlatan (or the cover), fastens one end, and then, instead of lifting up the basket and changing ends by muscular effort, he simply gives the handle a whirl with his fingers until the desired end swings into position. It is hard work to turn filled baskets all day long by main strength; this little revolving tray saves both effort and time.

Formerly it was thought necessary to sew down the tarlatan, now they simply tuck up the four corners under the basket rim—and there you are! That saves time too.

How to Save Trouble.

To prevent salt from caking add a little arrowroot.

Mixed mustard will keep a better color if a pinch of salt is added.

To remove quickly the paper from the bottom of a cake hold it in front of the fire.

When an oven is too hot for the proper baking of its contents, put a basin of cold water inside.

Never slam an oven door when anything is baking. Such a proceeding will ruin the contents.

To cut hard boiled eggs in smooth slices dip the knife in water.

The corks of bottles or jars containing substances apt to be sticky should be dipped in salad oil before being replaced.

Interested.

Mrs. Newrich—I never can remember how many cards to leave when calling.

Old Gentleman—The rules are very simple, madam. You hand one to the servant and then on departing leave as many on the plate as there are adult members of the family, adding two of your husband's cards and occasionally dumping in a few more for good measure. Do not be niggardly in dealing out cards, as that suggests vulgar poverty.

"I am very much obliged. Are you a professor of etiquette?"

"No, madam. I am Mr. Bristol, the card manufacturer." Exchange.

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